

for his release, saying that he was “detained only for peacefully exercising [the] right to free speech.” Prior to his arrest, Ferrer was offered the chance to go into exile and escape the regime’s brutality. However, he bravely chose to stay in Cuba and continue the struggle for freedom.

Regrettably, the arrest of Ferrer is not an isolated instance, but a common tactic of the regime. These arrests are part of an increasingly brutal campaign of oppression meant to silence Cuba’s growing pro-freedom movement. For example, we remember the daring protest of Andres Carrion Alvarez, the “mysterious” protester who dared to speak against the regime’s oppression during the Pope’s visit last month. Like Ferrer, he also languishes in prison for exercising his fundamental right to speak.

In fact, according to the Cuban Commission on Human Rights and National Reconciliation, the number of political arrests more than doubled in 2011 from those in 2010. This year, the regime is on course to make even more arrests. For the first three months in 2012, the Castro dictatorship has made 2,393 political arrests.

The days of the aging Castro dictatorship are numbered, and soon the real criminals will be held accountable for their crimes. Until then, we must call on the international community to stand with brave pro-democracy activists like Ferrer, and we must continue to recognize those who refuse to stay silent in the face of brutal oppression.

The Cuban people are demanding freedom, and many pay a high price for their courage. Here in the halls of Congress, the Cuban people are never forgotten. While Ferrer waits in a dark, humid cell covered with insect bites and growing thinner each day, he is never alone.

RECOGNIZING THE NATIONAL DAY OF REASON

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 27, 2012

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Thursday, May 3, 2012 as the 2012 National Day of Reason.

The National Day of Reason celebrates the application of reason and the positive impact it has had on humanity. It is also an opportunity to reaffirm the Constitutional separation of religion and government.

On March 24, I was proud to address the tens of thousands of Americans who gathered on the Mall for the Reason Rally. These individuals came from all around the country to deliver a simple message: Reason must be the guiding principle of our democracy. In a nation of citizens from so many different backgrounds and beliefs, the only way we can solve our problems is through cultivating intelligent, moral, and ethical interactions among all people.

Our Nation faces many problems—bringing our troops home from Afghanistan, creating jobs, educating our children, and protecting our safety net from irresponsible cuts. We will solve these issues through the application of reason. We must also protect women’s reproductive choices, the integrity of scientific re-

search, and our public education system from those who would hide behind religious dogma to undermine them.

Finally, the National Day of Reason is about taking time to improve our communities. Every year, events are held on this day that demonstrate the desire of secular Americans to help their fellow citizens and our Nation as a whole. Community service events, such as food drives and blood drives, are just some of the ways that people will be working to help those in need on the Day of Reason and throughout the year.

I encourage everyone to join in observing this day and focusing upon the employment of reason, critical thinking, the scientific method, and free inquiry to improve our world and our Nation.

IN RECOGNITION OF WORKERS’ MEMORIAL DAY

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 27, 2012

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to observe April 28 as Workers’ Memorial Day and to commemorate all the workers who have suffered or died from workplace injury and disease. April 28 marks a day of solidarity with workers around the world and of renewed commitment to occupational safety and health.

Since the creation of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in 1970, the safety and rights of workers has become a high priority. Workplace fatalities have dropped by 65 percent. We have made significant progress in protecting Americans’ right to a safe and healthy workplace. However, we can and must do more to protect our workers and hold accountable employers who do not comply with safety standards and regulations. Even one death or injury is one too many.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, 3.3 million people in the United States suffer a workplace injury each year, and 12 Americans are killed each day on the job. The direct and indirect costs of these occupational injuries in the year 2010 alone are estimated to fall between \$159 and \$318 billion. The sad truth is that these injuries and deaths are entirely preventable.

As a proud member of the Congressional Labor and Working Families Caucus, I have strongly supported legislation to protect the safety and wellbeing of American workers and their families. I was a cosponsor of the “Protecting America’s Workers Act,” which would increase protections for whistle-blowers, increase the penalties for certain violations, and give more rights to injured workers. I have opposed any effort to repeal, delay, or weaken the enactment of any health and safety standards.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join workers and union members across the country in recognizing Workers’ Memorial Day and keeping in mind its slogan: “Remember the dead, fight for the living.” On this day, I would like to honor those who have lost their lives simply by going to work and their families who have sacrificed so much.

TRIBUTE TO HAROLD PHILLIPS

HON. JON RUNYAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 27, 2012

Mr. RUNYAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to pay tribute to a true American hero, Harold Phillips of Moorestown, New Jersey for his courageous and dedicated service to our Nation.

In 1942, President Roosevelt established a presidential directive giving African Americans an opportunity to be recruited into the United States Marine Corps, USMC. These African Americans, from all states, were not sent to the traditional Marine Corps boot camps of Parris Island, South Carolina and San Diego, California. Instead, African American Marines were segregated—experiencing basic training at Montford Point—a facility at Camp Lejeune near Jacksonville, North Carolina. Approximately twenty thousand African American Marines received basic training at Camp Montford Point between 1942 and 1949. The Montford Point Marines fought courageously during World War II in key battles such as Iwo Jima, Okinawa and Saipan.

Harold Phillips, a lifelong Burlington County resident, joined the Marines right out of high school in 1943, and went to Montford Point for Marine Corps boot camp. Harold went on to serve as a member of the Marine Corps’ first African-American combat unit, the 51st Defense Battalion. Like other African American servicemen, he served during a period of considerable racial discrimination but persevered and his example paved the way for future generations of African Americans to serve their country honorably in the military.

I was proud to cosponsor H.R. 2447, a bill to grant the Congressional Gold Medal to the Montford Point Marines, which was signed into law November 23, 2011. For their dedicated service to our Nation, I hope Harold Phillips and the other Montford Point Marines will soon be awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor Congress can bestow.

Harold has lived a life of patriotism and service to his community, his state and his country. He is a pioneer who forged a path for future generations of African American men and women to serve their country in the Armed Services. I am proud to call Harold Phillips my constituent and I urge my colleagues to join me in thanking him for his service.

CONGRATULATING LT. COLONEL FREDRICK L. SPAULDING FOR WINNING THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS

HON. DAN BURTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 27, 2012

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I am honored and humbled to rise today to honor a fellow Hoosier, Lt. Colonel Fredrick L. Spaulding, who was recently awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, our Nation’s second highest award for military valor, for his extraordinary heroism at the Battle of Fire Base Ripcord during the Vietnam War.